



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

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FLOODPLAIN DISTRICT

Provisions for Construction and Alterations
City Code 38-38

The City of Falls Church, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has designated certain areas within the city that are at greater risk for damage and loss due to flooding. New construction, alterations and additions to existing structures may be allowed on properties that lay within the designated area known as the “100-year floodplain”, providing they satisfy certain provisions.

The purpose of these provisions is to prevent the loss of life and property and prevent the creation of health and safety hazards. These provisions include—

- All properties designated as being within the 100-year floodplain cannot be developed and no structure shall be located, relocated, constructed, reconstructed, enlarged, or structurally altered EXCEPT in full compliance with the terms and provisions of Section 38-38 and any other applicable ordinances and regulations.
- During the review process of a site plan, grading plan or building permit application, certain uses, structures or developments that will cause increases in flood heights, velocities, or frequency of flooding will be regulated and may be prohibited. Any use, activity, or development that adversely affects the capacity of the channels or floodway of any watercourse, drainage ditch, or any other drainage facility or system is prohibited.
- New structures or additions must meet more stringent standards for waterproofing and protection from flood damage, which may require the elevation of the structure floor to at least (1) foot above the 100-year flood levels, and at least (3) feet above that level for certain electrical hardware. Structures may be required to be built upon piers to facilitate flood water flow.
- All uses, activities, and development occurring within any floodplain district require the issuance of a flood plain permit by the zoning administrator after review for compliance. An elevation certificate from a surveyor / engineer is required based upon as-built conditions for residential construction in the floodplain. A flood-proofing certificate is required for nonresidential construction in the floodplain.
- For projects that propose any alteration or relocation of a watercourse or stream, a permit must first be obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Virginia State Water Control Board, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. Notification of the proposal shall be given by the applicant to all affected adjacent jurisdictions, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation (Department of Conservation and Recreation), and the Federal Insurance Administration.
- Site plans for developments in the floodplain must include the elevations of the lowest floor, the elevation to which the structure will be flood-proofed, the elevation of the 100-year flood, and the site’s proposed ground elevations.
- Prohibited uses include the storage of materials and equipment that are toxic, flammable or explosive; solid waste, landfills, dumps, junkyards, outdoor storage of vehicles and/or materials; the filling of marshlands or wetlands; damming or relocation of any watercourse that will result in any downstream increase in flood levels during the one-hundred-year flood; the construction or storage of any object subject to flotation or movement during flooding; commercial parking or loading areas; manufactured homes and recreational vehicles.

Note: This is a summary of the Code. Please refer to 38-38 for specifics and additional information. An online version of the Code is available at-- <http://www.ci.falls-church.va.us/>